

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection.

2. (Original) The peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to Claim 1, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38.

3. (Currently Amended) The peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38.

4. (Currently Amended) The peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the peptide ~~further has a property of being~~ is recognized by an HLA-A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell.

5. (Currently Amended) A polypeptide comprising:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38, or
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell.

6. (Original) A polypeptide having an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide according to Claim 5.

7. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to Claim 5 ~~or 6~~, further having a property of being recognized by an HLA-A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell.

8. (Currently Amended) A nucleotide encoding: ~~a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 or a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7~~

a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,

b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,

c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,

d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell, or

e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),

or a nucleotide having a sequence complementary thereto.

9. (Currently Amended) An antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity which recognizes ~~[[a]] at least one peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 or a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7~~ selected from the group consisting of:

a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,

b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection,

wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,

- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell, and
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d).

10. (Original) A vector comprising the nucleotide according to Claim 8.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of inducing a cytotoxic T cell ~~by using~~, wherein said method comprises:

contacting a cytotoxic T cell with at least one [[a]] peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4 or a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7 selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell, and
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d).

12. (Currently Amended) A method of detecting a hepatitis virus ~~by using a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9, wherein said method comprises:~~
detecting at least one of any of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) binding of an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity to at least one of a) through e).

13. (Currently Amended) A method of diagnosing hepatitis C virus infection ~~by using a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9, wherein said method comprises:~~
detecting at least one of any of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,

- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) binding of an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity to at least one of a) through e).

14. (Currently Amended) A method of preventing or treating hepatitis C virus infection by using ~~a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9~~ at least one of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,

- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity which recognizes at least one of a) through e).

15. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising as an active ingredient ~~a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9~~ at least one of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity which recognizes at least one of a) through e).

16. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition according to Claim 15, which is a hepatitis C virus vaccine.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of predicting the prognosis of hepatitis C virus infection by using ~~a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9~~ at least one of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity which recognizes at least one of a) through e).

18. (Currently Amended) A kit for diagnosing hepatitis C virus infection or predicting the prognosis of hepatitis C virus infection comprising ~~a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, a polypeptide according to any one of Claims 5 to 7, a nucleotide according to Claim 8 or an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity according to Claim 9~~ at least one of the following:

- a) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus according to claim 1,
- b) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,

- c) a peptide derived from hepatitis C virus comprising an HLA-binding motif in its sequence and being recognized by an antibody detected in a patient with hepatitis C virus infection, wherein the peptide has an amino acid sequence having a homology of at least 70% with the amino acid sequence represented by any one of SEQ ID NOS: 1 to 8, 16, 20 and 38,
- d) any one of a) through c) wherein the peptide is recognized by an HLA A2- or HLA-A24-restricted cytotoxic T cell,
- e) a polypeptide comprising any one of a) through d),
- f) a nucleotide encoding any of a) through e),
- g) an antibody or a substance with an antibody-like activity which recognizes at least one of a) through e).